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January 24, 1978

Adm. Stansfield Turner  
Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Admiral Turner:

Enclosed is the edited version of Joe Fromm's interview with you on Saturday, which we are planning to publish in the next issue of the magazine. Please feel free to make any changes that you feel desirable.

Because of our press requirements, we would appreciate it if we could have your corrected copy of the interview returned by Wednesday afternoon. If you will have Herb Hetu's office call Joe Fromm -- 333-7400, Ext. 575 -- when the approved version of the interview is ready, we will arrange to have it picked up promptly.

We appreciate the time you gave Joe on Saturday. The interview, we feel, will be very informative to our readers.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

*Marvin*  
Editor

MLS:1  
Enclosure

ORIGINAL  
TRANSCRIPT

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

McLean, Va.  
January 21, 1978

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Q Admiral Turner, how do you answer the charges that you're emasculating intelligence operations overseas by getting rid of 820 officials in the clandestine services?

A We are not cutting the clandestine service overseas.

We are not emasculating its capability to collect intelligence for us. The 820 cut is coming out of the headquarters.

Reducing overhead and reducing unnecessary supervision of the people in the field will in fact have the reverse impact. It will increase productivity overseas.

Q If you're merely getting rid of superfluous overhead, why have the clandestine services become so bloated?

A Because the mission of intelligence in this country has changed over the last 30 years, we have to adapt to the change. Thirty years ago we were interested primarily in collecting intelligence about the Soviet Union, its satellites and the few countries around the world where they were trying to establish a position. Today, we're inter-

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ested in intelligence in a wide variety of countries.

Also, for most of the past 30 years the Central Intelligence Agency was called upon by the nation not only to tell what was going on overseas but to help influence events -- for example, in Guatemala, Iran, Cuba, Vietnam, Angola. Today we don't think that kind of interference in other people's governments -- political action -- is as useful a tool for this country. We're not eschewing it completely, but we're downplaying it.

These changes require a shift in the way the operations of the Directorate of Operations is organized and run. I believe that we needed to reduce the size of that organization -- and I find nobody out here who's informed who disputes the fact.

Q Are you going overboard in your reliance on technology rather than traditional spying to do the job, as some critics complain?

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A Quite the reverse. Everything I am doing is designed to emphasize improved human intelligence collection. One of the things that I have done in the past year is to stimulate increased interest and attention on the part of the top policy makers in the Government in what human intelligence collection can do for them. And they're giving us lots of support in that direction and more guidance as to what they want. That's what helps to make good clandestine intelligence collection. You want to collect what people need, not what you think is important.

Now, the advent of new technological means of collecting intelligence is one of the factors that is creating change in the process of intelligence in a very substantial way. The trouble is that in a general sense technical intelligence tells you what happened yesterday. Ever since the Battle of Jericho in biblical times the human intelligence agent has helped you to find out what's likely to happen

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58 I FIND THAT THE MORE TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE DATA I GIVE TO THE POLICY MAKERS, THE MORE  
tomorrow. / OFTEN THEY ASK ME WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TOMORROW -- THE INTENTIONS OF THE OTHER SIDE, AND I MUST TURN TO THE HUMAN INTELLIGENCE

So, contrary to the implication of your question, the advent of better technical collection has led to greater demands for the kind of collection which is done by the human intelligence element.

PEOPLE OF THE CIA FOR THOSE ANSWERS.

Q What about the allegations that you are destroying morale in the CIA by getting rid of so many people in such an abrupt manner?

A There have been lots of complaints because nobody likes to be asked to leave. My measure of basic morale, however, is that I see no drop in the dedication, in the quality of

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the work of these employees. They're a most dedicated, capable lot of people. I have not seen a drop in the quality of the work. When you make as many changes as I believe are necessary in our over-all intelligence operations today to adapt to the times, to modernize, you're bound to have grumbling.

I am totally convinced that there is wide consensus in the Central Intelligence Agency that these changes are generally needed. I don't say that everybody agrees on the exact form and the exact timing and so on, but the idea that we must move forward into a new concept, a new age of intelligence, is universally accepted.

Q But aren't spies or people operating undercover abroad a special breed who require special handling?

A They certainly do. They're a wonderful group. But we must have a new and modern personnel-management system here, and this reduction is part of a move in that direction.

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Very frankly, it's long overdue.

We have not in the past planned a career progression to insure that we will have new blood coming in to replace these dedicated, marvelous people who are leaving. We had a wonderful influx in the late '40s and early '50s of most capable, dedicated people. Two things are different today. First, these people have gone through the system, and we've not programed their replacements.

Secondly, they came into the Agency in a period of cold war -- a period of great dedication after World War II -- and they were willing to sacrifice and work. Today I think you have to give better incentives, better rewards to young people in their early 30s to get them to stay in this career. I am trying to remove enough at the top to create **MORE OPPORTUNITIES** ~~a section~~ so that there will be young people coming forward with adequate training and with an added incentive to make this a career.

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I would rather have a short-term morale problem among these disaffected people whom we have had to ask to leave -- I'd rather have them disgruntled for a very short period of time than I would to have a long-term, gnawing morale problem existing in the bowels of this organization where the future lies.

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Q Are you at all concerned about the possibility of any of these disaffected people compromising the CIA or even engaging in work with hostile groups?

A I'm not at all concerned about these people who have been dismissed being traitors to their country. They're dedicated, loyal people who have served well for their country. Two thirds of them have served long enough to retire and will be pensioned immediately upon leaving the Agency. I can't imagine those people **BEING DISLOYAL OR** subjecting themselves to the danger ~~and the unloyalty~~ of conducting treason.

I am most disappointed, however, at the lack of professionalism that some of them have shown by going to the media with their personal complaint against me and against the fact that I have had to bite what is a difficult and unpleasant bullet in carrying through a retrenchment. That is unprofessional, and it reflects the worst fears of the American public about the Central Intelligence Agency -- namely, that

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its operators will not respond to duly constituted authority.

And I am pleased that if we had people like that in the Agency, they are gone because I will not tolerate people who will not follow the duly constituted leadership. This organization must be under full control at all times.

Before this planned reduction, I fired five people because they were not under control. The minute I found out about it they went out the door. There's no mincing words on that one with me.

Q As you see it, Admiral Turner, how does the reorganization announced by the White House on January 23 strengthen our intelligence system?

A It's a major step forward for the country. It emphasizes that the policy makers must get involved with the intelligence process in terms of setting the priorities for what we should do.

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Beyond that, it gives to the Director of Central Intelli-

gence -- ~~myself~~ -- enhanced authorities to insure the ade-

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quate co-ordination of the entire intelligence apparatus of the country because there are a number of agencies and quite a few people involved. Particularly with the changes in the ways we collect intelligence today, there is a great need for better co-operation. Under this new executive order, I will be permitted to task all the intelligence-collection agencies of the Government that are funded in the national-intelligence budget. This will exclude intelligence activities funded in the defense budget -- such as an Army lookout on a hill or a tactical airplane or something like that.

Secondly, I am given authority to put together and present to the President the single national-intelligence budget and to make the recommendations to the President on what we should be buying, how many people we should have, how much operating funds that we need for the entire intelligence community.

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I think that this new authority will still leave independence where it's needed within the intelligence community, but provide centralized control where it's been lacking.

Q Under the reorganization, will you in effect become Intelligence Czar?

A As Director of Central Intelligence I will have greater authority than that position has had before. At the same time, there are clear limits on that authority -- particularly there are limits over the interpretation of intelligence. The last thing that any of us want is a single individual who can determine what the interpretation of the intelligence data is to be. When it comes to interpretation of intelligence, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research are quite independent of the Director of Central Intelligence. We meld interpretations together and see where we differ.

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But I have no authority to tell them how to interpret, how to analyze the information.

Q What is being done to guard against the kind of abuses by the intelligence community that have been so widely publicized in the past few years?

A Well, I think abuses have existed but have been grossly exaggerated. Over the last several years, we have established in this country some very fine controls. They amount to what I call "surrogate public oversight." The problem is that the public cannot oversee the intelligence agencies as it does the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Commerce or other agencies that work in a more or less unclassified atmosphere.

So, instead, we have oversight in the executive branch by the President and the Vice President and by the National Security Council, which under the new executive order has certain oversight responsibilities -- for instance, preparing

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an annual report on how we're doing and what we're doing. Then there is the Intelligence Oversight Board -- three distinguished American citizens -- appointed by the President to look into the legality and the propriety of our intelligence activities and to report directly to the President.

Outside the executive branch, we have the oversight of two committees of the Congress dedicated just to intelligence. They're a big help to us. They keep us sort of in tune with the American public. I think that's where the intelligence community has gone astray before. They were a little bit too isolated. Going up and testifying on Capitol Hill regularly keeps you from being isolated.

Q Can you run an effective intelligence organization when you must tell so much to congressional committees?

A Yes, I believe we can. The committees have shown a tremendous sense of responsibility, a tremendous sense of

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restraint in not getting into such operational detail that would endanger lives of people or the ways we do things, but still getting into adequate detail to conduct the kind of oversight that they need.

The next year or so will be very important as we and the Congress work out the next step in this process after the executive order -- that is, legislative charters establishing statutory controls over our activities. The degree of detail in those charters will be very important to our future. I anticipate a spirited but friendly and co-operative debate with the Congress over the next few months in just how those charters are drafted.

Q Admiral Turner, given the vast amount of money that this country pours into intelligence activities, why did the CIA underestimate the Soviet grain crop by a wide margin?

~~and miss apparent signs of South African preparations for~~

~~a nuclear explosion?~~

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A First of all, we're not perfect, and we're not Avis --  
we're No. 1, but we're still trying hard.

IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR TO  
X The Department of Agriculture frequently misses the LONG RANGE  
OF THE  
FORECASTS American grain crop by 5 per cent. We missed the Soviet

crop by 10 per cent. Because of reasons of classification,  
I can't tell you all the reasons we missed it by 10 per  
cent. But I can assure you that getting detailed informa-  
tion in a country that hides something that is really of  
global importance and impact, as the Soviet grain crop is,  
is not easy. It is particularly difficult when in the last  
month of the season they had a ~~very bad~~ weather situation  
there which we think is largely what tipped the difference.

Let me say, though, that we did predict that the Soviets  
were buying grain and would continue to buy grain, and as  
a result the market did not jump markedly or significantly  
after the announcement was made of what their harvest was  
going to be. So we think we did serve the American public

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even though our prediction was wrong.

We'll always miss one here or there. If those are the worst that we missed, I'm reasonably happy. But I don't want to say that I'm happy that we didn't do well on those. We are certainly going to try harder and harder.

(END INTERVIEW)



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1-25-78

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Joe —

Here is the corrected  
version for your files —  
many thanks —

